

PCT

WORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ORGANIZATION
International Bureau



INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

(51) International Patent Classification 5 : A61F 13/56, A41H 43/04		A1	(11) International Publication Number: WO 91/04724 (43) International Publication Date: 18 April 1991 (18.04.91)
(21) International Application Number: PCT/SE90/00631 (22) International Filing Date: 2 October 1990 (02.10.90)		(81) Designated States: AT (European patent), AU, BE (European patent), CA, CH (European patent), DE (European patent)*, DK (European patent), ES (European patent), FI, FR (European patent), GB (European patent), HU, IT (European patent), JP, LU (European patent), NL (European patent), NO, SE (European patent), US.	
(30) Priority data: 8903256-9 4 October 1989 (04.10.89) SE		Published <i>With international search report. In English translation (filed in Swedish).</i>	
(71) Applicant (for all designated States except US): MÖLN-LYCKE AB [SE/SE]; S-405 03 Göteborg (SE).		(72) Inventors; and (75) Inventors/Applicants (for US only) : KLING, Robert [SE/SE]; Vävaregatan 13, S-511 63 Skene (SE). WALL, Berth-Ove [SE/SE]; Trollbackevägen 14, S-483 00 Landvetter (SE).	
(74) Agents: KIERKEGAARD, Lars-Olov et al.; H. Albihns Patentbyrå AB, Box 3137, S-103 62 Stockholm (SE).		(54) Title: A METHOD OF SECURING AN ELASTIC BAND	
(57) Abstract			
<p>The present invention relates to a method of securing an elastic band (13) between two material layers (14) which consist at least partially of meltable material. According to the invention, the elastic band is provided with perforations in the form of holes and/or slots. The band is placed between the two material layers and the layers are bonded together through the perforations by melting or fusing the layers together at locations opposite the perforations. The invention also relates to an elastic band which has been affixed in this manner and to a diaper which includes such a band.</p>			

* See back of page

DESIGNATIONS OF "DE"

Until further notice, any designation of "DE" in any international application whose international filing date is prior to October 3, 1990, shall have effect in the territory of the Federal Republic of Germany with the exception of the territory of the former German Democratic Republic.

FOR THE PURPOSES OF INFORMATION ONLY

Codes used to identify States party to the PCT on the front pages of pamphlets publishing international applications under the PCT.

AT	Austria	ES	Spain	MC	Monaco
AU	Australia	FI	Finland	MG	Madagascar
BB	Barbados	FR	France	ML	Mali
BE	Belgium	GA	Gabon	MR	Mauritania
BF	Burkina Faso	GB	United Kingdom	MW	Malawi
BG	Bulgaria	GR	Greece	NL	Netherlands
BJ	Benin	HU	Hungary	NO	Norway
BR	Brazil	IT	Italy	PL	Poland
CA	Canada	JP	Japan	RO	Romania
CF	Central African Republic	KP	Democratic People's Republic of Korea	SD	Sudan
CC	Congo	KR	Republic of Korea	SE	Sweden
CH	Switzerland	LI	Liechtenstein	SN	Senegal
CM	Cameroon	LK	Sri Lanka	SU	Soviet Union
DE	Germany	LU	Luxembourg	TD	Chad
DK	Denmark			TC	Togo
				US	United States of America

A Method of Securing an Elastic Band

5 The present invention relates to a method of securing an elastic band between two layers of material which are made at least partially of meltable material. The invention also relates to an elastic band secured between two layers of material and intended for use in articles intended for one-time use only, such as disposable diapers, sanitary napkins, surgical dressings, 10 protective clothing or the like, and also to a diaper which includes such an elastic band.

15 In the manufacture of articles intended for one-time use only, such as disposable diapers or the like, it is desirable that these articles can be worn comfortably, will function effectively and fit properly, besides having an attractive appearance. These attributes are often compared with the attributes of corresponding multi-use articles. Such articles are traditionally 20 manufactured from very soft, woven or knitted textile materials which are comfortable to wear and in which great care has been taken in cutting and sewing the materials from which the articles are made.

25 When manufacturing disposable articles, however, it is not possible to use expensive materials or to apply complicated and expensive manufacturing methods, since the articles would then demand an unreasonably high price. Instead, the traditional textile materials are 30 usually replaced with plastic film, different types of non-woven fabric and tissue layers. Techniques such as gluing and welding are used, instead of sewing the articles together.

One particular problem in this respect is that of providing elasticated edges, for instance elasticated leg, waist and sleeve bands. Normally, elastication in the form of elastic tape, bands or threads is secured along the edges of the article to be elasticated with the aid of melt adhesive. This method has several drawbacks, however. For instance, the glue has an uncontrollable stiffening effect on the elastic devices used, therewith impairing the elasticity of said devices. In the case of disposable diapers, for instance, the elastic devices, or elastication, is normally placed between two casing layers, normally a plastic film and a non-woven fabric layer. The elastic devices are mounted between the casing layers and fastened thereto while in a stretched state, whereafter the elastic devices return to their non-stretched, shorter state and gather together those parts of the casing layers to which the devices are attached. As a result, there is formed, primarily in the plastic film relatively sharp folds which are liable to chafe the skin of the wearer. Gluing of the elastic devices also causes the elasticated edge to become hard and chafing. These known elasticated edges are thus not as comfortable as would be desired.

Another drawback is that the formation of folds in the outer layers, or casing layers, results in the formation of channels between the elastic devices and the wearer's skin. This is particularly disadvantageous when the elastic devices are placed around the leg and waist parts of diapers, since these channels provide routes through which excreted body fluids can escape from the diaper.

Neither can the known elastications be considered to satisfy the desire for an attractive, fabric-like appearance, but instead result in a wrinkled and shapeless finished article.

5

Difficulties are also experienced in the manufacture of articles where the elastication is glued thereto. The main problem is that the glue, which may be a melt glue or a thermosetting glue for instance, requires a certain amount of time for heating and cooling or drying the glue after it has been applied. During this time period, it is necessary to maintain the elastication in a stretched state, which presents a problem in a continuous manufacturing process. Furthermore, the necessity of handling a glue requires the provision of expensive special-duty equipment for avoiding troublesome occurrences, such as the adhesion of glue to machine rolls and knives.

20

Hitherto, it has not been found possible to provide in a simple and ready fashion elasticated edges which possess varying degrees of elasticity within different parts of the edges, or where certain parts of said edges are completely inelastic. Various methods of providing elastication in limited areas, or with varying degrees of pretensioning, in a continuous manufacturing process have been proposed, for instance, in BG 2 113 983, EP 184 072, US 4 642 151, US 4 425, 173, US 4 486 192, US 4 081 301, US 4 711 683 and US 4 642 109.

25

The present invention, however, now provides a simple method of securing an elastic band between two material layers while avoiding the drawbacks experienced with earlier known elastication.

30

35

The inventive method is mainly characterized in that perforations in the form of holes and/or slots are formed in the elastic band; in that the elastic band is 5 placed between the two material layers; and in that material layers opposite said perforations are bonded together at locations through said perforations with the aid of a melt adhesive.

10 The invention also relates to an elastic band secured between two material layers.

When such an elastic band is fastened onto an article which is intended for one-time use only, there is 15 obtained a soft, non-chafing elastic edge. This is mainly due to the fact that no glue is used to fasten the elastication, but that the elastication is held mechanically between two mutually bonded material layers. Consequently, both the elastication and the 20 material layers will retain their original softness and suppleness. This is also due to the fact that the elastic band can move to a certain extent in relation to the material layers surrounding said band, thereby enabling said layers to pleat or fold independently of 25 one another when the elastic band relaxes. Distinct from the earlier known elastications, which gather the surrounding material layers into sharp, chafing folds, the material layers will form around an inventive elastic band soft, rounded folds which bulge outwardly 30 from the elastication. This is because the material layers are bonded to the elastic band by mutually spaced bonds, those parts of the material layers located between the bonds are not bonded at all.

It should be mentioned that in the present context, the expression elastic band refers to an elongated elastic body whose width has a much greater extension than the perforations formed therein in accordance with the invention.

A further advantage provided by an inventive elastic band resides in the possibility of achieving varying degrees of stretchability or elasticity within different regions of one and the same elastic band, simply by changing the bonding pattern. This feature is particularly useful in the case of all-in-one type diapers, for instance. Diapers of this kind comprise an absorbent pad which is enclosed between a liquid permeable, inner casing layer and a liquid-impermeable, outer casing layer or backing sheet. The elastication is normally applied along the edges of the absorbent pad, so as to form elasticated waist and leg edges. The diapers also include self-adhesive fastener tabs, which are attached to the corners of the diaper on the backing sheet, i.e. on that part of the diaper which is distal from the wearer in use. The tabs function to hold together the sides of the diaper, so as to obtain a trouser-like configuration around the abdomen of the wearer. The fastener tabs are secured over the front part of the diaper, i.e. that part of the diaper which faces towards the wearer in use.

When securing the fastener tabs, it is desirable that the surfaces of the diaper material are as smooth as possible. This applies particularly to that part of the front part of the diaper on which the fastener tabs are intended to be secured in use. If this part of the diaper is wrinkled and irregular, the fastener tabs will not grip securely and there is a risk that the

diaper will not be held together during use. An advantage is also afforded when the tab attachments on the rear part of the diaper have inelastic, smooth regions, since this facilitates securing of the tabs to the diaper during manufacture, and also provides more positive attachment of the fastener tabs. If the tape-fastening areas are elastic and the fastener tabs are secured to the diaper with the elastic devices are broken down in a stretched state, there is a serious risk that the tabs will loosen from the diaper when the elastic devices are relaxed from their stretched state and subsequently contract. The present invention, however, enables totally inelastic regions to be readily provided, by selecting an elastic-device bonding pattern such that the elastic devices are broken down in these regions and loose their elasticity.

It is also possible to adjust the degree of elasticity around the leg openings of the diaper, for instance. The greatest elasticity is preferably found within those regions in which the elastic devices are attached to the crotch region of the diaper, i.e. that part of the diaper which, in use, is intended to lie between the wearer's thighs. On the other hand, there is preferably chosen in those parts of the elastic devices which extend along the front and rear portion of the diaper a bonding pattern which will reduce the elasticity of the elastic devices.

A further advantage afforded by an elastic band configured in accordance with the invention is that it imparts an aesthetically attractive, well-tailored appearance to the finished article. The elastic band appears soft and comfortable, whereby the finished article looks to be extremely comfortable, to the

naked eye.

When an inventive elastic band is secured to the surrounding material layers at solely mutually spaced bonding locations, which permits the material layers to fold or pleat freely in relation to the elastic device, there is obtained an airy elastic edge and the soft material folds give a certain padding effect. The risk of the skin becoming irritated is very small, since the folds in the material layers bonded to the elastic band provide a certain ventilating effect, which will keep the skin beneath the elastic band substantially dry during use. The elastic band may also be made from an open-cell foam material, so as to provide air ventilation through the actual band itself, provided that at least one of the surrounding material layers is permeable to air.

A number of advantages are also obtained when manufacturing an elastic band in accordance with the invention. For instance, the troublesome handling of glue is avoided, as is also the need of drying or heating and cooling melt adhesive. Furthermore, there is avoided the need of complicated devices for varied stretching of the elastic devices, or of devices for handling pieces clipped from said elastic devices.

The invention will now be described in more detail with reference to exemplifying embodiments thereof illustrated in the accompanying drawings.

Figure 1 illustrates a diaper according to a first embodiment of the invention, seen from the side which faces the wearer in use.

Figure 2 illustrates a diaper according to a second embodiment, seen from the side which faces the wearer in use.

5 Figure 3 is a sectional view taken on the line III-III on the diaper of Figure 2.

10 Figures 4-8 illustrates different methods of applying an inventive elastic device to the edge of an absorbent article.

Figure 9 illustrates schematically a process for the manufacture of an inventive elastic device.

15 Figures 10 and 11 illustrate different bonding patterns.

20 Figure 12 is a diagram which illustrates the contraction of two elastic bands having mutually different bonding patterns.

25 The diaper illustrated in Figure 1 comprises a liquid-permeable casing layer 1, which is intended to face towards the wearer in use, a liquid-impermeable casing layer 2, which is distal from the wearer in use, and an absorbent pad 3 which is enclosed between the casing layers 1, 2. The liquid-permeable casing layer 1 preferably comprises some type of non-woven fabric or perforated plastic film, whereas the liquid-impermeable casing layer 2 may comprise, for instance, a liquid-impermeable plastic film or a hydrophobized non-woven fabric. When worn, the diaper is intended to embrace the lower abdomen of the wearer in a trouser-like fashion, and to this end has a front part 4 which is intended to be placed over the wearer's stomach in use,

a rear part 5, which is intended to be placed over the wearer's bottom in use, and a narrower crotch part 6 which is located between the front part 4 and the rear part 5 and which is positioned between the wearer's thighs in use. Along its two short sides, the diaper also presents a front waist edge 7 and a rear waist edge 8, which together form the waist part of the diaper in use. Fastener tabs 9, 10 are disposed along the sides of the diaper rear-part 5, close to the rear waist edge 8. The tabs 9, 10 function to hold the diaper together to form a trouser-like configuration in use, and are therewith fastened to the front part of the diaper against the liquid-impermeable layer. To this end, the front part is preferably provided with a reinforcing layer, within the region in which the tabs shall be fastened. The reinforcing layer may consist, for instance, of a polypropylene plastic strip and functions to enable the tabs to be refastened.

20 Elastic devices 11, 12, for instance in the form of elastic bands or yarn-spun threads, extend from the centre of the front waist edge 7 of the diaper in a V-shaped pattern towards the rear waist edge 8 of said diaper. A further elastic device 13 in the form of a broad rubber band or a band made of elastic foam material extends along the rear waist edge 8, between the two fastener tabs 9, 10. When the diaper is worn, the elastic devices 11, 12, positioned in a V-shaped pattern, form the elastication around the edges of the diaper legs, whereas the elastic device 13 attached along the rear waist edge 8 forms the elastication around the edge of the waist part of the diaper. This latter elastic device is placed within a casing 14 of heat-meltable fabric surrounding said device, and is secured to the casing at discrete bonding locations 15.

25

30

35

The elastic device 13 is divided into three separate regions 16, 17, 18, having mutually different bonding patterns. A first bonding pattern, in which the bonding locations 15 have the form of discontinuous lines extending transversely to the direction in which the device 13 acts, is disposed in the two regions 16, 18 which lie closest to the fastener tabs. In the region 17 at the centre part of the elastic device 13, the bonds are disposed in punctiform rows instead.

10

The bonds located in said region 17 cover a smaller area of the elastic device 13 than the bonds located within the regions 16, 18 nearest the fastener tabs 9, 10, and have a small extension transversely to the direction in which the elastic device 13 acts. In this way, the elastic device 13 will retain essentially the same degree of elasticity within this region 17 as in its non-bonded state.

15

Within the regions 16, 18 located nearest the diaper fastener tabs 9, 10, where the bonds are disposed with small extension in the action direction of the elastic device, but extend substantially perpendicularly to said direction, the bonded elastic device 13 has lost practically all of its elasticity. The greater bonding density within these regions 16, 18 also contributes to reducing the elasticity of the device 13. As before mentioned, the inelastic regions 16, 18 are intended to ensure that the tabs 9, 10 will fasten effectively.

20

25

The arrangement of bonding regions in the form of broken lines avoids the occurrence of channels which extend transversely across the full width of the elastic device and through which liquid is able to run when the diaper is worn. Instead, discontinuous folds are

30

35

formed in the casing 14 around the elastic device 13, these folds preventing the through-passage of liquid but permitting air and water vapour to pass therethrough.

5

As illustrated in Figure 1, the elastic band 13 with surrounding casing 14 is attached to the liquid-permeable casing layer 1 of the diaper while in a stretched state, for instance with the aid of ultrasonic welding techniques. If the elastic band is manufactured separately, outside the diaper manufacturing line, the actual attachment of the band is effected in the elastic region 16, 18, whereas only a few attachment points are used in the region 17, therewith to reduce the elasticity of the band and to ensure that no space is formed between the band 13 and the casing layer 1 when the band contracts in this region in the finished product. According to one preferred embodiment, the band 13 will have an incomplete bonding pattern when applied to the casing layer 1, and the bonding pattern is completed by fastening the band to said casing layer. Naturally, the band can also be glued firmly to the casing layer, in which case only a few glue points, or preferably longitudinally extending glue beads will occur in the region 17.

25

The diaper illustrated in Figure 2 is constructed in essentially the same manner as the diaper illustrated in Figure 1 and includes a liquid-permeable casing layer 101, a liquid-impermeable casing layer 102, and an absorbent pad 103 enclosed between said casing layers.

35

The diaper has an hour-glass configuration and, similar to the diaper of Figure 1, has a front part 104, a rear

part 105, a crotch part 106, and a front and a rear waist edge 107, 108. Diaper fastener tabs 109, 110 are provided on the side edges of the rear part 105, close to the rear waist edge 108. An elastic device 113 is
5 attached along the rear waist edge 108, within a non-woven fibre casing 114, with a bonding pattern corresponding to the diaper illustrated in Figure 1. The diaper illustrated in Figure 2 also includes two further elastic devices 111, 112 of the same kind as the
10 first elastic device, but positioned in the longitudinal direction of the diaper on either side of the absorbent pad 103. These devices 111, 112 are intended to provide the diaper leg elastication. The devices are enclosed in longitudinally extending folds 116 in the
15 liquid-permeable casing layer 101 of the diaper, as will best be seen from Figure 3. Similar to the diaper illustrated in Figure 1, the elastic devices 111, 112 are secured within the folds 116 by ultrasonic welding, wherein the ultrasound perforates the elastic devices
20 111, 112 in a predetermined pattern and fuses together the surrounding casing parts 114 through the perforations. Each of the elastic devices 111, 112 presents five regions 117-121 having three mutually different bonding patterns and different degrees of elasticity.
25 The greatest elasticity is found in the elastic devices 111, 112 within the crotch part 106 of the diaper, where the bonding pattern consists of discrete, punctiform bonds. A bonding pattern in the form of broken, transverse lines has been used within the regions 117,
30 121 nearest the waist edges 107, 108. As before mentioned, this bonding pattern causes the elastic devices 111, 112 to be practically inelastic within these regions.

5 The elastic devices 113 are bonded with a pattern of intersecting, broken, oblique lines in those regions 118, 120 located between the inelastic regions 117, 121 at the waist edges 107, 108 of the diaper and the regions 119 in the crotch part 106 thereof. This bonding pattern results in a lower elasticity than the punctiform bonds at the crotch part of the diaper, but in greater elasticity than the transverse bonds at the waist edges of the diaper.

10 15 Figures 4-8 illustrates examples of methods of securing an inventive elastic device to one edge of a diaper or to some other absorbent product. Corresponding elements in the Figures have been identified with the same reference signs. In all of the embodiments illustrated in Figures 4-8, the elastic device consists of an elastic strip of open-cell foamed plastic.

20 25 30 35 The elastic device 201 illustrated in Figure 4 is attached in the extension of an absorbent pad 202, which has a liquid-impermeable layer 203 attached to one side thereof, i.e. the outwardly facing side thereof. The liquid-impermeable layer is folded around the edge part 204 of the absorbent pad, so as to prevent the leakage of fluid passed said edge. A liquid-permeable layer 205, for instance a polypropylene non-woven fabric layer, is attached to the other side, the inwardly facing side, of the absorbent pad 202. The liquid-permeable layer 205 extends beyond the absorbent pad 202 and over the elastic device 201, and is folded back around the free edge 206 of said device and fastened, e.g. with the aid of melt adhesive, to the liquid-impermeable layer 203 on the outer side of the absorbent pad 202. The elastic device 201 is thus enclosed in a fold 207 located externally of the

absorbent pad 202 in the liquid-permeable layer 205 and is secured within the fold 207 at discrete bonding locations 208, in accordance with the invention.

5 In the embodiment illustrated in Figure 5, the elastic device 201 is secured within a fold 209 in the liquid-impermeable layer 203, located externally of the edge 204 of the absorbent pad. This layer 203 normally comprises plastic film and in order to avoid contact
10 between the plastic film and the wearer's skin in use, the liquid-permeable layer 205 extends on the inside of the diaper completely past the edge 204 of the absorbent pad, to the free edge 206 of the elastic device.

15 Figure 6 illustrates a further example of a method of securing the elastic device 201 within a fold 207 in the liquid-permeable layer 205. The liquid-impermeable layer 205 extends beyond the absorbent pad 202 and is folded around the elastic device 201, without being
20 folded back across the pad 202. The liquid-impermeable layer 203 extends on the outside of the pad 202 up to the free edge 206 of the elastic device. An extremely effective leak-proof construction is achieved in this way.

25 The elastic device 201 illustrated in Figure 7 is secured within a casing 210 of heat-meltable non-woven fabric. The device 201 with surrounding casing 210 is attached to the liquid-permeable layer 205 on the
30 inside of the pad 207 and inwardly of the edge 204 of said pad.

35 The elastic device 201 illustrated in Figure 8 is also secured inwardly of the edge 204 of the absorbent pad. In this embodiment, however, the device 201 is secured

within a fold 207 in the liquid-permeable layer 205. The liquid-impermeable layer 203 in Figures 7 and 8 is folded around the edge 204 of the absorbent pad in the same manner as in the Figure 4 embodiment.

5

An inventive elastic device can be secured within a casing in the manner illustrated schematically in Figure 9. A heat melttable casing material 301, for instance in the form of non-woven fabric or plastic film, extends from a first reel of material, via a guide roller 302. At the same time, a band 303 of elastic material is fed from a second reel while passing between a first pair of rollers 304, 305, whereafter the casing material 301 is folded around the elastic band 304 by means of a folding plate 306, such that both sides of the band 303 are covered by the casing material 301. The band 303, together with the surrounding casing 301, is then transported over a patterned bonding roller 307. The bonding roller 307 presents raised portions or devices 308 which correspond to the desired bonding pattern of the finished elastic laminate. Bonding is effected with the aid of an ultrasonic horn 309. The ultrasound perforates the elastic band and fuses the casing material together through the perforations thus formed. The bonding pattern is predetermined and, as before mentioned, is controlled by the raised portions or devices 308 on the bonding roller. The resultant, bonded elastic laminate 310 is then advanced by a second pair of rollers 311 and 312 which are driven at a second speed which is higher than the speed at which the first roller pair 304, 305 is driven. Because the second roller pair 311, 312 is driven at a higher speed than the first roller pair 304, 305, the elastic band 303 will be stretched

30

25

30

35

before it is bonded within the heat-meltable casing 301.

5 The elasticity of the finished laminate 310 can be controlled in two ways. By selecting a given ratio between the speeds at which the first roller pair 304, 305 and the second roller pair 311, 312 are driven, it is possible to impart to the elastic laminate 310 a given maximum elasticity or basic 10 elasticity. By using different bonding patterns for different parts of the elastic band, it is possible to reduce to varying high degrees the basic elasticity determined by the speeds at which said roller pairs are driven. The finished elastic laminate 310 will thus 15 present parts of mutually different elasticity.

20 In order to illustrate how elasticity is affected by the bonding pattern, tests were carried out on two laminate samples having mutually different bonding patterns. The elastic devices used in both samples had a width of 50 mm and a thickness of 2 mm and comprised a band of flexible, polyurethane foam based on polyester. The elastic foam material is retailed by CIRRUS A/S, Denmark, under the designation 2 130 170. 25 The elastic band was enclosed in a non-woven fabric casing or envelope in the manner described with reference to Figure 9. The band was therewith stretched to 70%, meaning that the ratio between the first driving speed and the second driving speed was 1.70. The 30 non-woven fabric casing used comprise heat-bonded polypropylene fibres.

35 The first bonding pattern a) was in the form of small, discrete square bonding locations, as illustrated in Figure 10, whereas the second bonding pattern b),

illustrated in Figure 11, consisted of broken lines which extended substantially in the cross-direction of the elastic band.

5 Both samples a) and b) were then subjected to tensile tests on an INSTRON 1122, in order to compare their elasticities.

10 Each sample was tested in the following manner:

10 A sample having a length of 200 mm was secured firmly between the jaws of the INSTRON 1122. The sample was stretched to a load of 10 N. The jaws were then moved towards one another until the tensile stress in the 15 sample was 0 N. The sample was then allowed to rest for two minutes, in order to eliminate any residual stretch. The tensile stress was then again adjusted to 0 N.

20 The samples were stretched three times between the 0-level determined in the aforesaid manner and a tensile stress of 10 N. The jaws were moved together at a speed of 300 mm/min. and the sample contracting force when relaxing the tension was recorded as a function of 25 contraction in mm. The results obtained with these samples are shown in diagram 1, in which each curve represents an average value of the three stretch tests carried out. The sample a) contracted through 75 mm, whereas the sample b) only contracted through 40 mm. 30 Thus, a bonding pattern in which the bonding locations extend substantially perpendicularly to the direction in which the elastic device acts greatly reduces the elasticity of said device, whereas a punctiform bonding pattern will only slightly influence the elasticity of 35 said device.

The total surface area of the bonds is also significant to the elasticity of the device, in addition to the configuration of the bonds and their orientation in relation to the direction in which the elastic device stretches or acts. The larger the area on the elastic device that is taken-up by the bonding locations, the smaller the degree of elasticity of said device.

5

10 Although the inventive elastic device has been described with reference to diapers, it will be understood that the device can be used in a number of other applications. For instance, the invention can be applied in the manufacture of surgical dressings, protective clothing, underwear and sportswear.

15

20 In the Figures of the accompanying drawings, the inventive elastic device has been shown as a single elastic band. It will be understood, however, that the elastic device may consist of two or more separate bands.

25

It will also be understood that the elastic foam material used in the exemplifying embodiments may be replaced with other elastic materials, such as natural rubber, polyurethane rubber or the like.

30

35 The inventive elastic device can also be used to particular advantage in diapers having double leg elastication, i.e. such diapers as those in which each leg opening has an inner and an outer elastic edge. For instance, in this case, either the inner or the outer elastic edge is formed from an inventive elastic device, whereas the other elastic edge is of a conventional kind. Naturally, both edges can be provided with inventive elastic devices.

It is also conceivable to secure an inventive elastic device on the inside of a diaper, supplemented with a corresponding device of the same or a different kind on the outside of the diaper. This additional elastic device will prevent the diaper from ballooning from the wearer's body in use.

Other modifications are conceivable within the scope of
10 the following Claims.

Claims

1. A method of securing an elastic band (13) between two material layers (14) which at least partially consists of meltable material, characterized in that perforations in the form of holes and/or slots are formed in the elastic band (13); in that the band is placed between the two material layers; and in that the material layers opposite said perforations are mutually bonded by heat fusion through said perforations.
5
2. A method according to Claim 1, characterized in that the perforations are formed in the elastic band at the same time as the material layers are fused together.
15
3. A method according to any one of Claims 1 and 2, characterized in that the elastic band (13) is placed between the two material layers (14) while in a stretched state.
20
4. A method according to any one of the preceding Claims, characterized in that the elastic band is pretensioned by being stretched uniformly, is positioned between the material layers (301) and is caused to pass over a bonding roller (308) which has a pattern of raised portions thereon and which functions to bond the elastic band (304) to the material layers (301) surrounding said band, with the aid of ultrasound (309), wherein the ultrasound perforates the elastic device and fuses together the two material layers through the perforations in a bonding pattern corresponding to the pattern on the bonding roller.
25
30
35

5. An elastic band (13) secured between two material layers (14) for use in articles which are intended for one-time use only, such as disposable diapers, sanitary napkins, surgical dressings, protective clothing or the like, characterized in that the material layers (14) at least partially consists of meltable material; in that the elastic band (13) presents perforations in the form of holes and/or slots through which the material layers located on both sides of the band (13) are mutually joined together by melt fusion.

10

6. An elastic band (13) according to Claim 5, characterized in that the band presents at least two regions (16, 18) of mutually different bonding patterns and of mutually different elasticity in the direction in which the band acts.

15

7. An elastic band according to Claim 5 or 6, characterized in that it presents at least one region (17) of substantially punctiform perforations through which the two material layers are bonded together.

20

8. An elastic band according to Claim 5, 6 or 7, characterized in that it presents at least one region (16, 18) with perforations which have a smaller extension in the direction in which the device acts than perpendicularly to said direction and through which the two material layers (14) are bonded together.

25

30

9. An elastic band according to any one of Claims 5-8, characterized in that it consists of one or more separate bands of elastic foam material having open or closed cells.

10. An elastic band according to Claim 9, characterized in that the foam material is a polyester-based polyurethane foam.
- 5 11. An elastic band according to any one of Claims 5-8, characterized in that it consists of one or more separate bands of rubber material, such as polyurethane rubber or natural rubber.
- 10 12. A diaper comprising a liquid-permeable casing layer (1), which is intended to face the wearer in use, a liquid-impermeable casing layer (2), which is intended to lie remote from the wearer in use, and an absorbent pad (3) located between said two layers (1, 2), and which diaper has a front part (4) which is intended to be located forwardly on the wearer in use, a rear part (5) which is intended to be located rearwardly on the wearer in use, and a crotch part (6) which is located between the front part (4) and the rear part (5) and which is intended to be placed between the thighs of the wearer in use, so that the diaper, when worn, embraces the lower abdomen of the wearer in a trouser-like fashion and therewith presents a waist line (7, 8) around the waist of the wearer and a leg line around each of the user's thighs, characterized in that the diaper includes at least one elastic band (13) which is secured in a stretched state between two material layers (14) which are at least partially comprised of a meltable material; in that the band presents perforations in the form of holes and/or slots (15) through which the material layers (14) located on opposite sides of the band are mutually bonded by melt fusion, so that the elastic band (13) is held mechanically between the material layers (14); and in that the elastic band (13) is
- 15
- 20
- 25
- 30
- 35

affixed along the whole of at least one of the diaper lines or at least along a part of at least one of the diaper lines and at least one of the material layers (14) is joined to one of the casing layers in at least 5 one of the diaper line parts.

13. A diaper according to Claim 12, characterized in that at least one of the material layers (207, 209, 210) surrounding the elastic band (201) comprises one of the diaper casing layers. 10

14. A diaper according to Claim 13, characterized in that the liquid-permeable casing layer (205) is folded over the elastic band (201). 15

15. A diaper according to Claim 13, characterized in that the liquid-impermeable casing layer (203) is folded over the elastic band (201). 20

16. A diaper according to Claim 12, characterized in that the elastic band (201) is encased in a separate casing (210) of meltable material. 25

17. A diaper according to any one of Claims 12-16, characterized in that an elastic band (13) is attached at least along the waist line on the rear part (5) of the diaper; in that the diaper has fastener tabs (9, 10) which function to secure the diaper in a trouser-like configuration, said fastener tabs (9, 10) being affixed to the sides of the rear part (5) of the diaper in the close proximity of the waist line (7, 8); and in that the elastic band (13) presents a pattern of perforations (15) which extend substantially transversely across the band within those regions (16, 18) 30 of the waist line (7, 8) at which the fastener tabs 35

(9, 10) are affixed.

18. A diaper according to any one of Claims 12-17,
5 characterized in that an elastic band
(111, 112) is affixed to each leg line; and in that
said bands each present at least two regions (116-120)
of mutually different bonding patterns and therewith
mutually different degrees of elasticity.

10 19. A diaper according to Claim 18, characterized
in that each of the elastic bands
(111, 112) presents at least three regions (117-121) of
mutually different bonding patterns and therewith
mutually different degrees of elasticity, of which
15 regions the region (119) located in the crotch part
(106) of the diaper has the greatest elasticity.

20 20. A diaper according to any one of Claims 8-17,
characterized in that it includes further
elastic devices (11, 12) such as elastic bands or
threads which are affixed to the diaper by gluing or
welding.

1/7

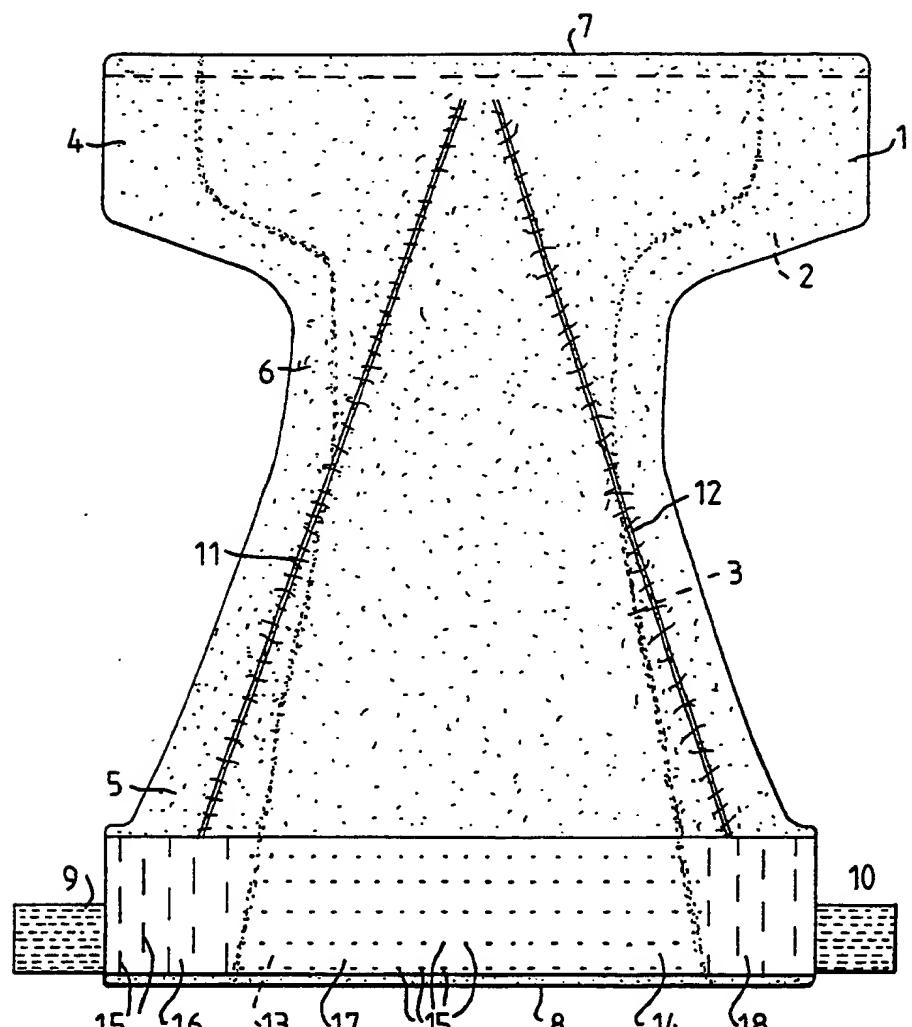


FIG.1

SUBSTITUTE SHEET

2/7

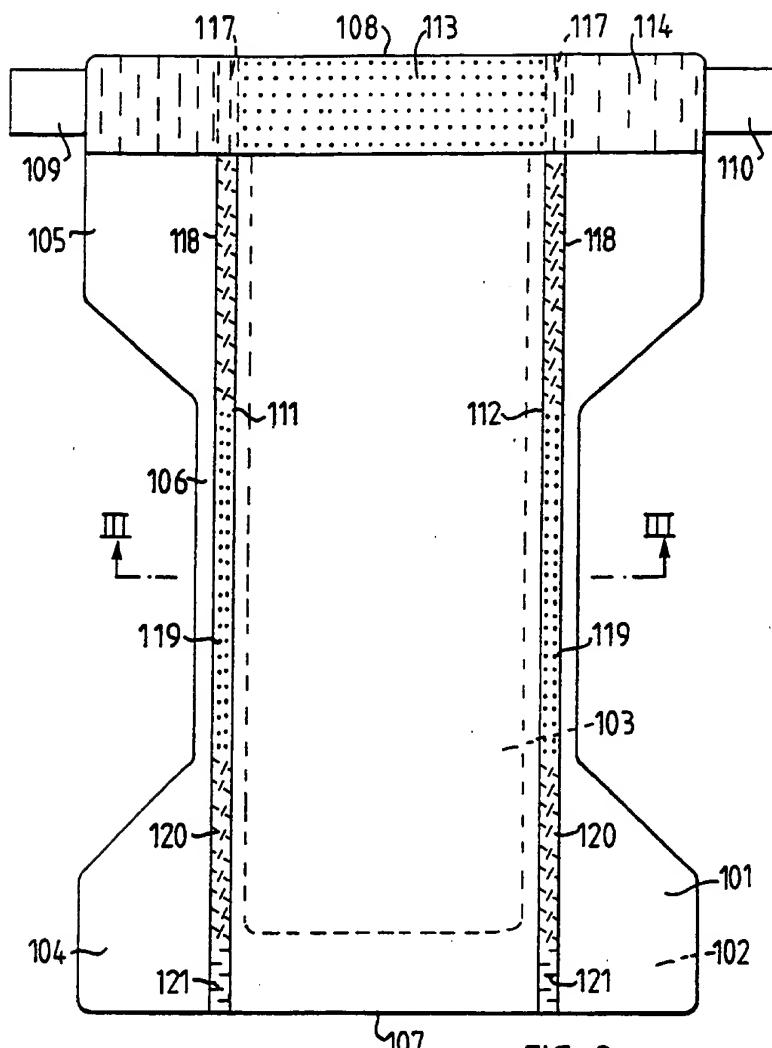


FIG. 2

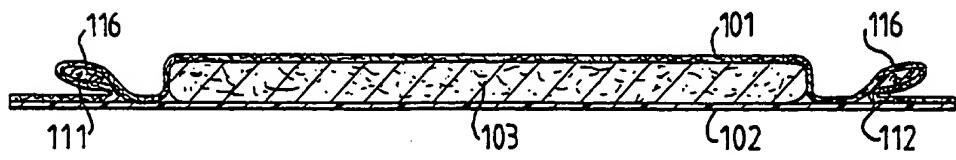


FIG. 3

SUBSTITUTE SHEET

3/7

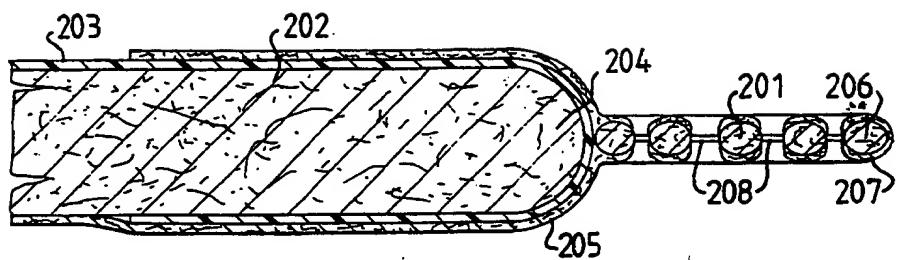


FIG. 4

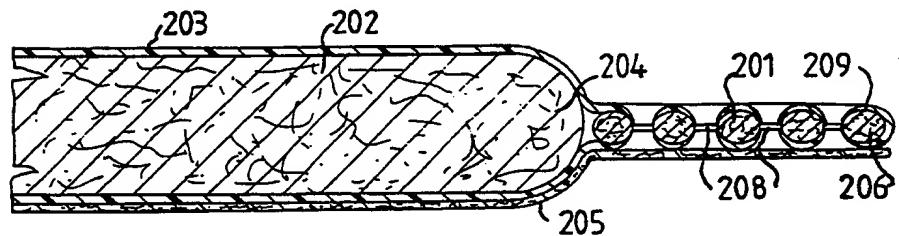


FIG. 5

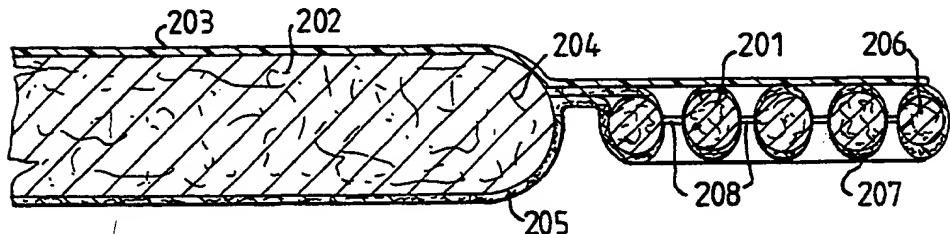


FIG. 6

4/7

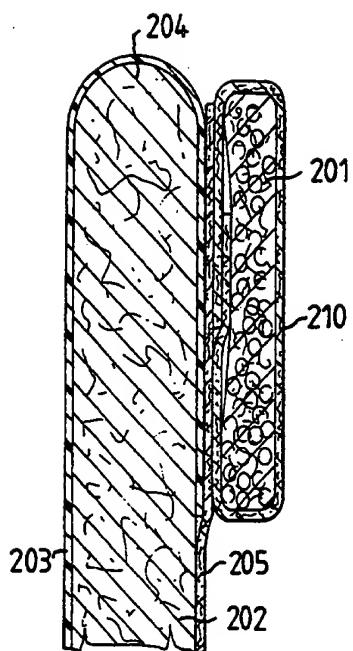


FIG. 7

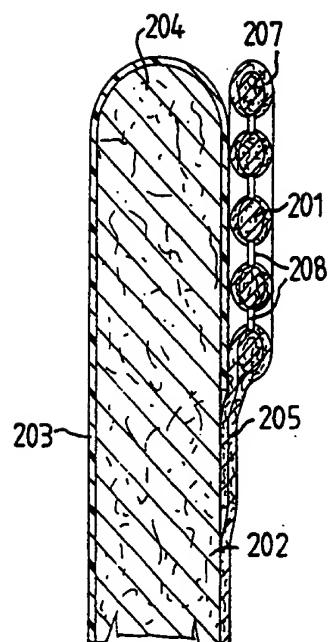
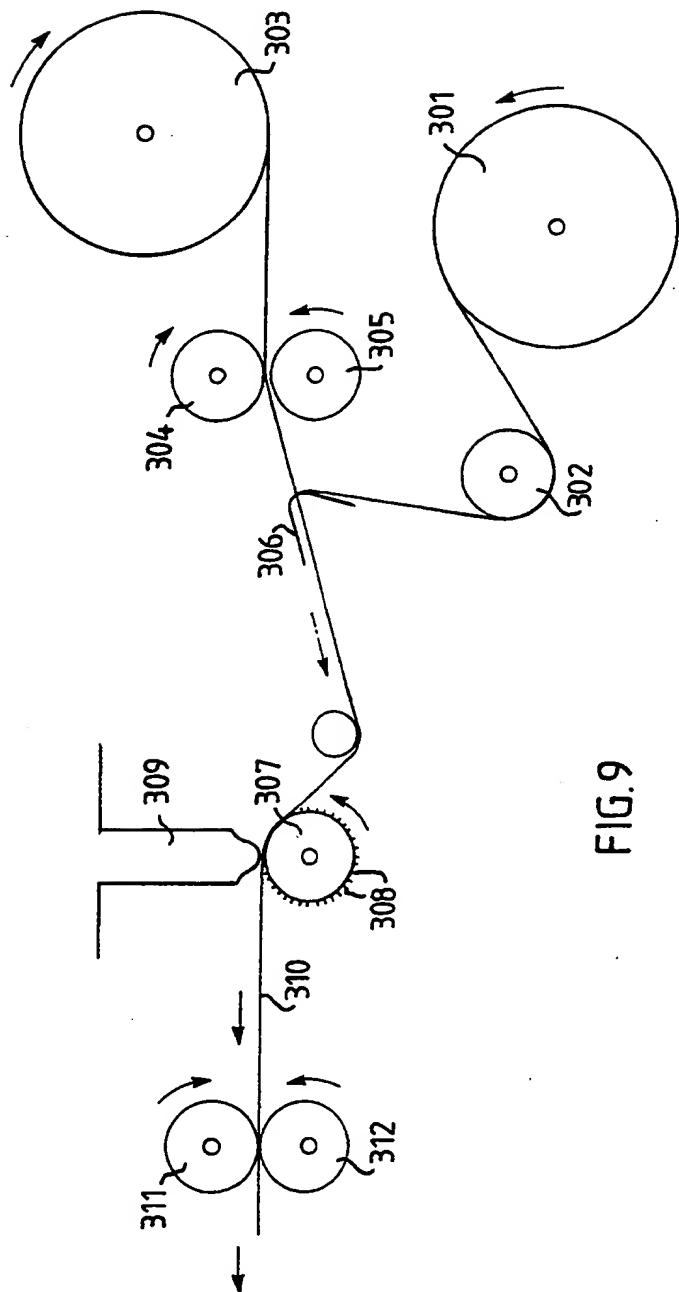


FIG. 8

5/7

**SUBSTITUTE SHEET**

6/7

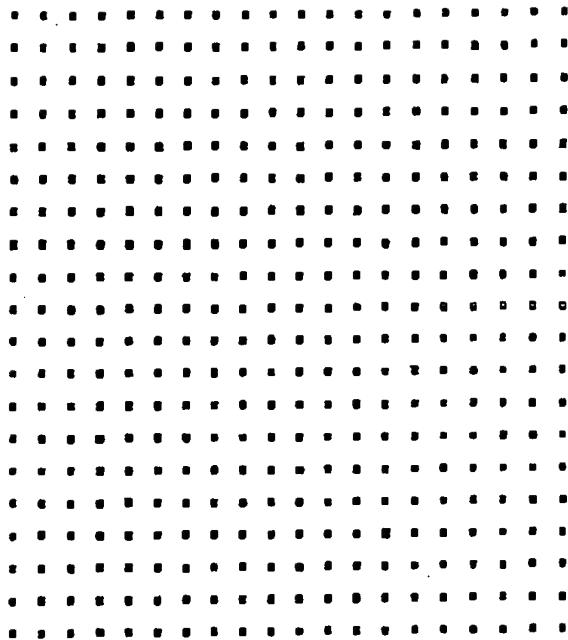


FIG.10

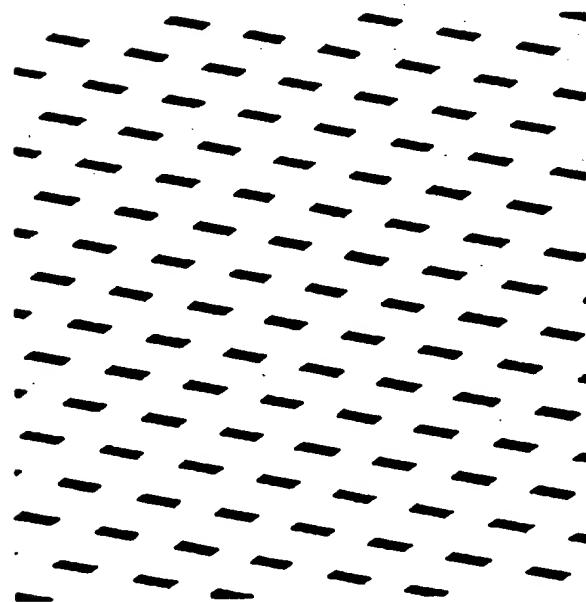


FIG.11

SUBSTITUTE SHEET

7/7

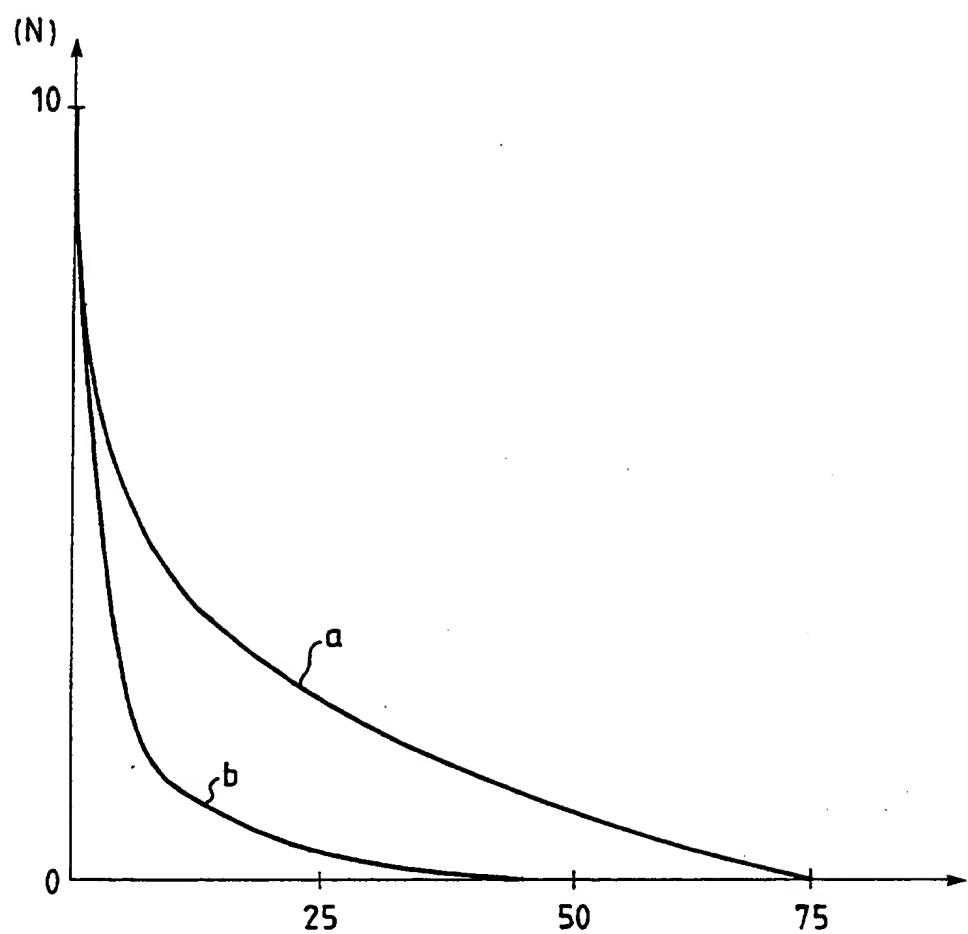


DIAGRAM 1

SUBSTITUTE SHEET

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No. PCT/SE 90/00631

I. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER (if several classification symbols apply, indicate all)⁶

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both National Classification and IPC
IPC5: A 61 F 13/56, A 41 H 43/04

II. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum Documentation Searched⁷

Classification System	Classification Symbols
IPC5	A 41 B, A 41 H, A 61 F

Documentation Searched other than Minimum Documentation
 to the Extent that such Documents are Included in Fields Searched⁸

SE,DK,FI,NO classes as above

III. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT⁹

Category	Citation of Document ¹¹ with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages ¹²	Relevant to Claim No. ¹³
Y	EP, A1, 0023804 (JOHNSON & JOHNSON BABY PRODUCTS COMPANY) 11 February 1981, see claim 1 --	1-20
Y	SE, B, 436393 (FAMECCANICA SPA) 10 December 1984, see page 5, line 8 - line 15; page 6, line 5 - line 12; claim 1 --	1-20
Y	GB, A, 2193100 (KIMBERLY-CLARK CORPORATION) 3 February 1988, see page 3, line 18 - line 19; page 3, line 35 - line 37 -----	1-20

* Special categories of cited documents:¹⁰

- "A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance
- "E" earlier document but published on or after the international filing date
- "L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)
- "O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means
- "P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed

"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention

"X" document of particular relevance, the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step

"Y" document of particular relevance, the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art.

"&" document member of the same patent family

IV. CERTIFICATION

Date of the Actual Completion of the International Search	Date of Mailing of this International Search Report
8th January 1991	1991-01-11
International Searching Authority	Signature of Authorized Officer

Ingrid Falk
Ingrid Falk

SWEDISH PATENT OFFICE

**ANNEX TO THE INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT
ON INTERNATIONAL PATENT APPLICATION NO.PCT/SE 90/00631**

This annex lists the patent family members relating to the patent documents cited in the above-mentioned international search report.
The members are as contained in the Swedish Patent Office EDP file on **90-11-28**
The Swedish Patent Office is in no way liable for these particulars which are merely given for the purpose of information.

Patent document cited in search report	Publication date	Patent family member(s)		Publication date
EP-A1- 0023804	81-02-11	AU-B-	538624	84-08-23
		AU-D-	6070080	81-01-29
		GB-A-B-	2056910	81-03-25
		JP-A-	56025441	81-03-11
		US-A-	4573991	86-03-04
SE-B- 436393	84-12-10	CA-A-	1135452	82-11-16
		DE-A-C-	2921876	79-12-13
		FR-A-B-	2427796	80-01-04
		GB-A-B-	2026323	80-02-06
		JP-C-	1387389	87-07-14
		JP-A-	54159041	79-12-15
		JP-A-	59112011	84-06-28
		JP-B-	61044961	86-10-06
		SE-A-	7904850	79-12-06
		US-A-	4226238	80-10-07
GB-A- 2193100	88-02-03	AU-B-	601186	90-09-06
		AU-D-	7340787	87-12-03
		DE-A-	3718076	87-12-10
		FR-A-	2606276	88-05-13
		US-A-	4770657	88-09-13

THIS PAGE BLANK (USPTO)